

Minutes Green Marblehead Committee April 6, 2023

Approved at May 4, 2023 meeting.

Present: Brooks Winner, MAPC; Thatcher Kezer, Town Administrator; Alexa Singer, Select Board; Andrew Petty, Board of Health; Dr. John Buckey, Superintendent of Schools; Joe Kowalik, Marblehead Light Dept; John Livermore, Sustainable Marblehead; Eileen Mathieu, Sustainable Marblehead; members of the public, including Jeanie Stahl, Lynn Bryant, Mimi Hollister.

Updates:

Sustainable Marblehead: Green Homes Tour Saturday April 8

Alexa Singer: Sustainability Manager and Human Resources Manager are in the basic budget for 2024, pending warrant review with the Fin Com.

Joe Kowalik: expanding Go Green rate to Commercial customers; Brooks spoke at last MMLB meeting on the goals of the Net Zero Roadmap; MMLB has voted to acquire more emission free electricity through MMWEC and has requested a higher amount than MMWEC suggested because other sources of emission free electricity are not available in time to meet the 2030 state goals for Municipal Light Plants; pursuing DOER energy efficiency grants for low income housing working with Marblehead Housing Authority; have posted a Sustainability Manager position for the Light Department.

Brooks: update from conference he attended, heard the Ipswich GM speak on finding ways to get interest free loans put on people's electric bills so the cost of electrifying their homes is amortized over years and offset by the energy savings of the electrification, leading to bills not increasing and leading to adoption of green technology by many folks who can't afford the upfront outlay. Also a recent webinar on DOER making funding available to smaller communities but no applications are available yet. Look on the MAPC website for more information. Also the concept of a Mass Green Bank which could provide seed money for Clean Heat. MAPC has a Federal Nerve Site to link all grant opportunities in one place.

Minutes: deferred; will review March minutes at May meeting.

Gas Powered Leaf Blower discussion:

Presented by Jeanie Stahl, the citizen sponsor of the warrant article

Discussion focused on emissions and there was agreement that they are a problem.

Jeanie asked that she could reference the Roadmap information in her presentation to show how problematic the emissions are. That was agreed.

It was pointed out that there is a line item in the park and rec 2024 budget to purchase an electric mower, and to track its costs, as Town Manager thinks that the lack of need for fuel and for maintenance will offset the additional cost to purchase.

During the discussion of the emissions profile of Gas Powered Leaf Blowers, Eileen presented some rough calculations.

GMC agreed that this rough quantification of emissions by Eileen showed how significant they are, and agreed that finding ways to reduce GPLB emissions would be part of future discussions as GMC goes forward, AFTER getting approval for the Roadmap.

Suggestion was made to Jeanie, to bring people together to discuss rather than typical Town Meeting angry tone, Jeanie said she has reached out to landscapers, but none will speak with her.

Final opinion: Endorsement of this warrant article on Gas Powered Leaf Blowers was tabled. The concern was, the Green Marblehead Committee is composed of 10 people, seven Town Employees, not all of whom are residents of Town, and that the Town employees who are not residents of the Town would have to recuse themselves from such a vote, because it may not be appropriate for them to take a position on a warrant article.

Net Zero Roadmap final review

Brooks went through the Roadmap page by page with the GMC members present:

he checked comments he had received with the GMC and once consensus was reached, he corrected/edited the version on line during the meeting. I will not list the edits here.

Points of discussion:

Net Zero by 2040

P 14: Goal of GMC is Net Zero by 2040. This is the goal developed by the GMC in conjunction with the townspeople, and should remain the stated goal. The group discussed Joe's rewrite on p 14 where he said that MMLD's goal is the statutory requirement to be Net Zero by 2050. People felt that MMLD needs to set the goal of achieving net zero in its portfolio as soon as possible, recognizing that the achievement of Net Zero for the Town will be impossible if MMLD is not relying on 100% non-emitting sources for its electricity by 2040. GMC agreed that the net zero by 2040 goal should be adhered to and set for this document and the Town and MMLD should try to reach it, despite the obstacles to MMLD achieving Net Zero by 2040 in its portfolio as of the present time, due to delays in offshore wind projects, and hydropower arriving by yet to be built transmission lines from Canada

Increasing local solar production:

Add commercial buildings to possible sites for community solar/ for installation of utility scale solar, also involve commercial establishments in battery storage.

Definition of community solar: MMLD uses roofs to generate energy for Town grid, also try to focus on equity while generating solar

GHG inventory:

Updates need to be planned? What interval?

What about boats, 2200 between both sides of the harbor

Complete Streets and recommendations on promoting biking and walking:

P 23 -24: Section on Complete Streets and improving options for getting around Marblehead by bike or car: Becky will look at the Roadmap and add relevant info.

EV's:

EVIP grants and Town fleet, discussion about obtaining further grants

Exploring other EV charging options besides in people's driveways, especially for tourists and for renters, Town and MMLD need to work together, Town has to commit space

Electric School buses and increasing busing: by this time Dr Buckey had left the zoom for another commitment, so could not get details. Questions if there are any available grants and exploring busing for townspeople to get around Marblehead by an electric shuttle, leaving their cars at a central location, to reduce traffic congestion, also, possible shuttle to local train stations in Swampscott and Salem. Also the role of universal busing of school children of all ages so parents don't have to drive to two or three schools at drop off or pickup.

Discussion about town vehicles and needing a charging point to electrify the Town fleet. Questions asked about Mass fleets program through EVIP, and whether MHD qualifies and whether we could get a grant for a fast charger. Discussion that current Mass law requires a certain size and design for EV charging spots, with essentially three parking spaces being needed to provide two EV parking spaces, which makes merchants, clubs, or local hotels and even places of worship, less willing to set up EV charging sites in their parking lots. Possibility that MMLD could negotiate with Park and Rec to build two EV charging stations at the COA, and that this could be combined with getting an electric van for COA. There was a comment that the school dept had looked into some EPA or other funding for electric buses, but MHD did not qualify.

Next steps

Becky will review the section on biking and getting around Marblehead and make it congruent with the Complete Streets work.

Becky will check with Jon Fobert, Tree Warden, to see if the section of the Roadmap about preserving tree canopy can be pursued.

Brooks will finalize the edits he did today and send to GMC to review.

Next meeting GMC May 4, from 3PM-430PM; plan FINALIZE the roadmap for presentation to the Select Board in May.

Goal: present to Select Board at its first meeting in May, probably May 10, at 7 PM, Brooks to do the presentation of the final Net Zero Roadmap for review and adoption by the SB.

Ask that Select Board assign the Green Marblehead Committee the responsibility as the Implementation Committee for the Roadmap, and the updating of it.

GMC needs to transition to new Chair for June meeting.

Brooks will ask MAPC to hold one more meeting of the four community group (Belmont, Ipswich, Peabody and Marblehead) to share their progress on their Roadmaps, in June 2023.

Respectfully submitted on April 12, 2023

Eileen Mathieu